

Baconfield  
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I. SUMMARY OF ACTION TAKEN FOR PREVENTION OF SPREAD OF  
DISEASE.

- (1) February 16th 1895. Case of Scarlet Fever at "The George Inn". Case isolated at "George Inn" for 14 days; as the patient was "too ill to be removed". Case thereafter isolated at "Isolation Cottage" for 4 weeks. Thorough measures of disinfecting the patient, and her surroundings were taken before her return home. Infection probably originated from "Beaconsfield Fair".
- (2) June 1, 1895. Case of Scarlet Fever in Shepherd's Lane. Isolated at once at Isolation Cottage. Every possible measure of disinfection taken at house where disease originated. No further spread of disease in house. Six weeks isolation. Complete desquamation. Clothing and bedding steam-disinfected. Some clothing burnt to ensure absolute safety. This was either a "return case" from Case 1; or infection was imported by sister from a Convalescent Home.
- (3) 7th Octr. 1895. Case of Scarlet Fever at Gas Works. Case not removed to Isolation Cottage. Removal advised by Medical Officer. Parents objected to removal. No action taken as regards enforcing removal, as house stands by itself at a distance from other habitations. No further cases in family. After complete desquamation of patient, house, bedding, clothing etc., <sup>were</sup> thoroughly disinfected. Some articles destroyed by fire to ensure thoroughness in disinfection.

Infection in this case probably came from case which occurred in the same family previously; and which had not been notified, nor seen by a medical man, as its nature was not suspected.

- (4) 12th July 1895 Case of measles in Shepherd's Lane.



Not isolated. Other children of family kept from attending school; and from associating with others. No further cases. Nos, (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) Cases of Whooping Cough. Other children of the families where cases arose kept from associating with other persons.

In connection with this part of the Report, it should be stated that the action of the Urban Council in appointing a woman to reside at the Isolation Cottage, so as to keep it in readiness for receiving infectious cases is a distinct advance, and is a piece of sound policy, as it tends towards the stamping out of dangerous Infectious Diseases.





## II. SUMMARY OF INSPECTIONS AND INQUIRIES MADE.

(1) March 14th 1895. "The George Inn" Sanitary arrangements here were found to be very imperfect. Complete reorganization of the drainage was advised; and that the yard be properly paved; the well cleaned out and repaired, and the gutters and gullies put into proper working order. The owners carried out the suggestions made.

(2) May 1895 "Bower Wood Cottages" The drainage here was inspected; and was found to be very primitive, and dangerous to health. On this state of affairs coming to the knowledge of the proprietor and his agent, remedial measures were promptly and voluntarily undertaken by them. New drains were laid, a new outfall provided at a distance from houses, and the premises were put in a thoroughly sanitary condition. The inspection here arose out of a case of "membranous sore throat", diphtheritic in nature, occurring in one of the cottages. Bacteriological examination of the membrane negatived true diphtheria; but the infection was stated to be probably due to faulty hygiene.

(3) June 19, 1895. Wattleton Pond, drains, and ditches connected therewith. Inspection of this pond, and its "feeders" revealed a state of things dangerous to public health. Offensive emanations from the pond and ditches constitute a danger both to passers-by on the public road, to the inhabitants of the adjacent lodges; and to the people of Beaconsfield. The prevailing winds in Beaconsfield being S.W. and W. the effluvia from this pond and its feeders are carried over the town, and are likely to be the source of much disease, directly and indirectly.





(4) June 20, 1895, and following days. Inspection of main drainage system of Beaconsfield. The drains and ditches and outfalls on the East, and on the South sides of the town are in a similar state to those on the West side already described.

Suggestions for improvement of the present drainage system will be found in another part of the report.

In my position as a Sanitary Officer and adviser to the Urban Council, I cannot but speak in terms of condemnation of the present drainage, but I admit that serious difficulties surround any great improvement scheme.

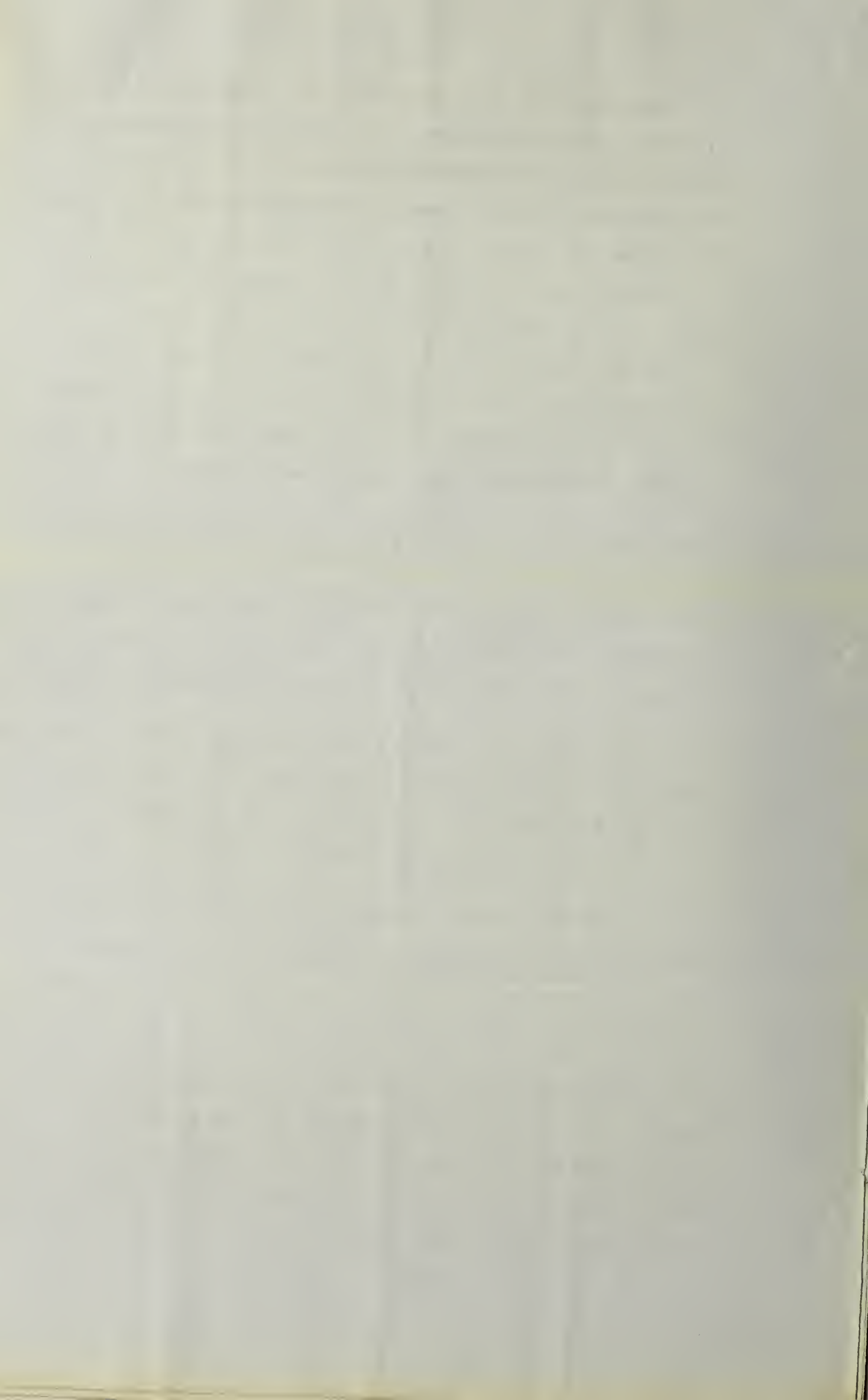
(5) June - July - August 1896. The street storm-water gullies having become a subject of frequent complaint by residents as to their offensiveness, they were severally inspected. In many instances the traps were found defective, but the Urban Council at once had them all repaired.

(6) Sept. 25, 1895 Grove's Yard, Aylesbury End. Complaint lodged about offensive smells from this yard. Scavenger found to have deposited closet pails in this yard.

Contractor forbidden to repeat the offence.

(7) "SLAUGHTER HOUSE" Grove's Yard. The use of this shed as a slaughter-house was condemned by the Medical Officer, unless certain improvements were made. No other action taken.

(8) 31st October 1895. "Elm Tree Public House" The Yard and Stabling here being complained of were inspected. Suggestions as to paving; and drainage, pail-closet, manure enclosure etc., were made. The owners are now (24 Feb. 1896) carrying out these suggestions.



(9) Many other inspections of less importance have been made. The lodging-house, and bake-houses, as regards sanitation have been kept under observation. In this connection it may be worth while to suggest that great improvements are possible in most of the dairies and cowsheds in the town.



### III. ACCOUNT OF THE SANITARY STATE OF THE DISTRICT

(a) WATER-SUPPLY. The present system of shallow surface wells, which are in close proximity to cess-pools in many instances, and which are dug in an area riddled with cess-pools is admitted on all hands to be a source of grave danger. The polluted water accounts for many cases of diarrhoea. It is a matter for congratulation that a Water Company has been formed for this and adjoining districts; and that water from a pure source is expected to reach the town during 1896.

(b) REMOVAL OF EXCREMENTAL MATTERS; AND OF HOUSE REFUSE.

The measures which are being taken by the Urban Council for removal of refuse, and for emptying the pails of the pail-closets are proving a distinct success, and are steps taken in the right direction. The efforts of the Council to discourage the old privy system and to lend its support to the removable pail system are productive of improved health and comfort to the townspeople. It is to be hoped that the Urban Council will soon see its way to still further develop the scheme it is promoting, by having a supply of dry earth or ashes for each pail; and thus prevent the present "sloppy" condition of many of the pails on removal. It may be worthy of note that only one complaint has reached the Medical Officer of Nuisance arising from this pail-system; and that was due to the carelessness of the Contractor for removal of the pails. It is to be hoped, that we may, one day, see every cess-pool near a dwelling ultimately closed, and pail-closets replacing all the privies.





(c) DRAINAGE

As already stated the drainage of the town requires immediate attention. It must at once be frankly admitted that any scheme of Main Drainage involving great outlay cannot be thought of. Nor does great outlay seem to me to be necessary. I have ventured further on in this Report to suggest and discuss shortly several possible schemes. Let me now endeavour to show wherein lies the danger of the present drains.

The Urban Council in giving its support to the pail-closet system certainly to a great extent removes some of the dangerous matter which would pollute wells, and, either through cesspools indirectly or directly enter the drains. But unfortunately urine and excremental products are not the only sources of matter which ultimately decomposing becomes dangerous to health. For drainage and washings of yards, and of cowsheds, drainage, and washings of stables, drainage of urinals, and of wash-houses, water from personal ablutions, washing of dishes, drainage and washings of slaughter-houses, emptying of night vessels (the last to my certain knowledge is not always into the pail-closet or privy) sink-waste pipes etc., all provide highly decomposable matters, which soon become offensive and dangerous to health. Such matters pass into the present system of large and leaky pipes, and brick drains, form deposits there and "sewer-gas"; or passing on cause the present obnoxious condition of the ponds and ditches. In addition to this several W.C.'s discharge into the present drains. Hence the necessity of having a more perfect drainage scheme.

POSSIBLE DRAINAGE SCHEMES

- (1) That a complete "combined" (i.e. surface-water and





"sewage" combined in one set of pipes) water-carriage system of sewerage be adopted.

This plan does not commend itself - firstly on account of its great expense; and secondly - because of the large size of the pipes necessary to carry off the storm-waters; and the difficulty of dealing with the mass of sewage thus collected.

(2) That the present drains be repaired, and their outfalls carried to greater distances from the town than at present.

This would probably mean re-laying of the whole system and become almost as expensive as scheme No 1.

(3) That a separate system of Iron pipes of small calibre (say about 6 inch) be laid for carrying only sink, waste, W.C. water, drainage of yards, and of roofs where not collected, and carried to one or more outfalls at a distance from the town. A pipe of the size suggested would be probably sufficient as it would keep itself clean, from the greater pressure of the water inside. These pipes could be easily and quickly laid, would be very durable. They would not be expensive, and they could be laid in the same trenches as the new water pipes (below the water pipes), and so save cost of labour. The proper size of pipes could be quite easily calculated, as the amount of sewage which would pass through them could be estimated very accurately. The present drains would serve well to carry off the surface, and storm water, with the exceptions mentioned above, and thus there could be no cause of complaint of fouling ponds, and creating nuisances, and public danger.

The scheme seems a very feasible one. It is evident that disposal of sink and waste water and "slops" must be provided for; for many houses have no ground attached over which such waste-water may be thrown. In this, Beaconsfield



differs from many country towns; as the houses are built so closely together.

(4) That W.C. sink and other waste waters and surface waters be carried by present pipes (repaired) to large catch-pits at a distance from houses; and that the contents of these be pumped out, regularly, over the land.

This plan implies the necessity of the present drains being made water-tight, which may prove impracticable.

(5) That finding present drains capable of repair, that they should be carried to a greater distance from the town, and that at the outfalls large filtering beds be constructed (probably two separate beds would be advisable for each outfall) under the advice of course of a competent engineer; and that these beds be placed under the care of a competent and intelligent servant of the Urban Council for regular inspection and cleaning.

Filtering beds near the town would be as obnoxious and more dangerous than the present ditches, and ponds.

As a rider to this scheme, it may be added that where practicable, especially for the larger houses, cess-pools, at a distance from the house, and regularly cleaned, are useful and permissible: and if possible their contents should be pumped out weekly over the adjacent land.

N.B. In any system adopted or planned allowance should be made for a possible extension of the town.

In the event of the proposed Water Works scheme reaching the town, probably more water will enter the present drains: and although this will be an advantage in keeping the drains more free from deposits it will not itself be sufficient to properly "flush" the drains: and if it did



"flush" them in the true sense of that term, probably the present drains would become leaky from the pressure.

There is a possibility that with the ease of obtaining water from the new supply, several new W.C.'s may be constructed, thus adding to the present dangerous state of the drains.

Doubtless the Council will have already considered, or intend to consider, some arrangement with the new Water Company whereby sufficient water may be obtained for "flushing" the new drains if any such scheme is adopted.

I would like to suggest further, that some arrangement for obtaining water, for watering the main streets of the town be come to with the Water Company.

30 gallons of water <sup>daily</sup> per head would be an ample supply, and would allow for increase of population; unless public baths be instituted.







#### IV. "SUPERVISION OF HOUSES AND PLACES"

I have inspected the construction of all new drains and other sanitary "improvements which have come within my knowledge. I am glad to be able to say that all such work has been carried out in an intelligent and workmanlike manner.

As regards the housing of the cottagers; many houses have been much improved; some almost entirely rebuilt. There seems to be a desire on the part of the owners to improve the well-being of their tenants.

Many cottages still are damp, and badly-lighted. The drainage is also defective in many, and many cess-pools in back-yards should be done away with. Overcrowding is not uncommon.

One half was given to the poor

39 Births and 26 Deaths have been registered in the year ending 31st December 1895.

The mortality for the year is 14.14 per 1000. This calculation is based on a probable population of 1831 at the middle of the year 1895. The figure 1831 is obtained in the usual way from the last two census returns. This mortality of 14.14 per 1000, although not high is not specially low for a country district, seeing that no epidemic has visited the town during the year.

HEART DISEASES account for by far the largest percentage of deaths. The total number of deaths (26 in all) is so small, that any calculations based on the deaths from different diseases would be valueless.

CANCER comes next in importance to Heart Disease as a cause of death in the district.

*One death was due to suicide*

There has been no case of death from a notifiable or dangerous infectious disease.

Altogether the town has been remarkably free from Infectious Disease, during 1895.

"Infectious Sore throat" is common, and is due to the condition of the drainage.

Notifiable Infectious Diseases are referred to under heading No 1.

In concluding this Report I have to thank the Urban Council for the support they have given me in my endeavours to fulfil honestly and to the best of my ability the duties of the post of Medical Officer of Health. May I also express a hope that in the near future we may see a solution

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of the difficult problem of the drainage of the town; and that Beaconsfield may soon become the "model town" not only of South Bucks, but of Buckinghamshire as a whole.

(signed) WILLOUGHBY KENNEDY

Medical Officer of Health to the Beaconsfield  
Urban Council.

25th February 1896

Burke House

Beaconsfield.

